

VZCZCXRO1259  
PP RUEHMR  
DE RUEHKI #0574/01 1021721  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 121721Z APR 06  
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3646  
INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE  
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000574

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/12/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [MOPS](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: ITURI UPDATE: MONUC MAY REVIEW ITS RELATIONSHIP  
WITH THE FARDC

REF: A. KINSHASA 562

[1](#)B. KINSHASA 359

Classified By: PolOff CBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Senior MONUC military officials are expressing frustration regarding joint Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC)-MONUC military operations in Ituri. Faced with logistical roadblocks impeding the FARDC's ability to respond quickly to situations and the general unprofessionalism of the Congolese Army in battle, MONUC commanders are recommending that MONUC "review its relationship" with the FARDC concerning future anti-militia operations. However, no such operational decision has been taken. MONUC continues to prepare for a renewed joint assault on Ituri militias -- including the training of FARDC reinforcements -- but operations are not expected to resume until the end of April. End summary.

-----  
NEW TACK IN ITURI  
-----

[1](#)2. (C) Following recent problems with elements of the FARDC in Ituri (reftels), MONUC's Eastern Division Commander, Gen. Patrick Cammaert, has reportedly said that MONUC should "review its relationship with the FARDC." Cammaert also said MONUC must now act "decisively" where needed, especially "where the lives of civilians are threatened." To this end, Cammaert reportedly said MONUC would soon establish a Joint Operations Center in Ituri from which military operations can be planned, coordinated and implemented.

[1](#)3. (C) MONUC-Ituri Head of Office Sharouh Sharif, who attended the meeting with Cammaert, told PolOff April 11 that MONUC forces are trying to become "more independent" of the FARDC, and that Cammaert wants the MONUC peacekeepers to be "more robust" in their anti-militia operations. When asked how MONUC could operate in that capacity under its current mandate, Sharif said MONUC can take action against militia forces if they are attacking or threatening civilians. Sharif said such was presently the case in Ituri, adding that MONUC has acted this way in Ituri in the past. He also said Cammaert's plan is for MONUC to take "robust military action" against the militias, meaning that MONUC peacekeepers would take the lead in any operation. Currently MONUC only provides logistical and air support for FARDC soldiers at the head of any military engagement.

[1](#)4. (C) Sharif said Cammaert's new strategy is to utilize MONUC's military resources, such as attack helicopters and superior firepower, to chase militias from their bases. Following such missions, the FARDC would come in behind MONUC

troops and guard the newly-taken territory. In this scenario, Sharif explained, MONUC and the FARDC would still be operating jointly, albeit in a slight reversal of roles.

-----  
FARDC A WEAK PARTNER  
-----

15. (C) Undisciplined and unpaid FARDC troops continue to victimize civilians in Ituri, as was the case recently in the village of Katoto. According to Katoto authorities, approximately 25,000 people (nearly the entire village population) have moved to neighboring villages to escape FARDC exactions. Those fleeing the FARDC join the tens of thousands of IDPs in Ituri who have recently left their homes in the wake of militia activity elsewhere in the province (reftel A), further adding to the region's security problems.

16. (C) According to an internal report, MONUC believes the FARDC "has become very much part of the security problem in Ituri instead of a solution to it." The reaction of some local communities to FARDC misbehavior has also contributed to a rise in Ituri's instability. MONUC reports that local leaders are becoming increasingly disgruntled with the FARDC's activities to such a degree that many are tempted to lend their support to the militia.

-----  
MONUC CHANGES  
-----

17. (C) MONUC's Ituri Brigade is presently undergoing a change in leadership. According to MONUC officials, the Brigade's

KINSHASA 00000574 002 OF 002

commander, Brig. General Anwar Ibn Noor, was "sacked" April 10. Sources report General Cammaert was reportedly "not happy" with Noor's level of "aggressiveness." They say Noor was apparently not pro-active enough for his commanders in dealing with the militia threat, particularly for not considering a change in the policy of putting FARDC troops in the lead of military operations. Cammaert reportedly wants someone who will be "stronger" at the top of the command, will "stiffen up" the FARDC, and will be more aggressive militarily. One problem the new Brigade Commander will have to address, said a MONUC military officer, is improving the coordination of the three Ituri Brigade battalions, currently comprised of Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Moroccan peacekeepers. Sharif said Noor (a Bangladeshi) did not have the trust of the other battalion commanders, which added to a lack of effectiveness and a coordinated command structure. The new Brigade Commander, yet unnamed, will come from Bangladesh, and is expected to arrive in Bunia at the end of April.

-----  
PUSHING AHEAD  
-----

18. (C) Meanwhile, MONUC continues to prepare for a renewed attack against militia elements in Ituri. MONUC's Ituri Brigade April 5 launched a training program for FARDC troops sent from North Kivu (from the FARDC's 811th Brigade) to reinforce existing FARDC soldiers in the district. MONUC officials report that military operations -- delayed since early March following a mutiny by FARDC commandos (reftel B) -- will resume following this training. Cammaert also reportedly indicated that the resumption of the suspended military operations is "imminent." Sharif said, however, that military officers in Bunia did not expect operations to recommence until the end of April.

19. (C) Comment: Cammaert's new MONUC approach would be a liberal interpretation of MONUC's mandate. In light of the FARDC's inability to conduct operations independently, MONUC officials may have no other choice if the immediate priority

objective -- securing the DRC's elections -- is to be achieved. Underequipped, undertrained and underpaid, the FARDC are more often a hindrance than a help in improving security. In any event, determined military action must be undertaken soon in Ituri if the militia threat is to be contained or eliminated before the country's June elections.  
End comment.  
MEECE